

# The IDVA Update



## General Assembly Short Session

The short session of the Indiana General Assembly is over for this year and there were two small but important changes regarding veterans in the state.

Senate Bill 25 was passed and signed by the Governor and it removed the June 30, 1999 limiting date from the Remission of Fees for the Child of a Disabled Veteran law.

In addition to the removal of the June 30, 1999 limiting date from the Remission of Fees laws, the State Student Assistance Commission and this Department have imposed a number of Administrative Rules on the Remission of Fees program.

Beginning this year, the adopted child of a disabled veteran must have been adopted prior to the child's 24 birthday in order for the child to be eligible for the program. And the veteran must have been a resident of

the State of Indiana for at least 3 years at some point during his lifetime.

The administrative rules stated above are the broad statements, the specific language will be sent to all service officers when finalized copies are and available.

The second bill that passed and the Governor has signed is Senate Bill 100. This bill eliminates the requirement for the Superintendent of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's home to be an honorably discharged veteran, and establishes a preference for an honorably discharged veteran when two or more candidates meet the requirements for appointment.

## The Disabled Veteran Hunting and Fishing Licenses

The Disabled Veteran Hunting and Fishing License program is gaining momentum around the state and we have a smoother procedure operating this year.

Any Indiana resident who has a documented service connected disability is eligible for an annual hunting and fishing license at a reduced rate of \$2.75. The License

covers the hunting of small game and fishing, excluding any required stamps. Which means you still have to buy the deer stamps, migratory bird stamps, trout/salmon stamps etc. in addition to the basic license.

The procedure is to fill out your application form, which you get from your county Veterans Service Officer or at [www.wildlife.in.gov](http://www.wildlife.in.gov). Send the application and your check for \$2.75 to the Department of Natural Resources, Customer Service Center, 402 W. Washington St., Room W-160, Indianapolis, IN 46024. and enclose a self addressed, stamped envelope. Within 2 weeks you should get your certified application and this years license in the mail.

Next year you should be able to take your certified application to the vendor where you normally purchase your licenses and stamps and purchase your license without the need to mail anything in.

If there are questions concerning this program please call the Department of Natural Resources at (317) 233-4976 or the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs at (317) 232-3910 or 1-800-400-4520

## Six New County Service Officers

Six new County service officers are working around the state.

Blackford Co.	Jim Dolan	(765) 348-3151
Fayette Co.	Mike Schonfeld	(765) 825-8412
Kosciusko Co	Michael Barnett	(574) 372-2436
Pike Co.	Rick France	(812) 354-6245
Tipton Co.	Bill Steen	(765) 675-2221
Floyd Co.	Glen M. Hammack	(812) 948-5495

At the time of this writing I have more information on some of these men than others.



**Jim Dolan  
Blackford Co.**

Jim Dolan in Blackford County is a retired business executive and a WWII veteran. He was a Gunner/Engineer in the Douglas A- 20 flying 60 missions in Europe.



**Mike Shonfield  
Fayette Co.**

Mike Shonfield in Fayette County is a retired Police officer from Connersville. He has a Purple Heart for wounds received in Vietnam during a tour in the U. S. Marine Corps.



**Mike Barnett  
Kosciusko Co.**

Mike Barnett in Kosciusko County served four years in the U. S. Navy, and worked as a civilian fire fighter for the Air Force then spent 22 years as an Indiana State Police Officer. He and his wife currently operate a bail bond business and he works as a private investigator



**Rick France  
Pike Co.**

Rick France from Pike County served in the U.S. Air Force from 1967 through 1971 including an in country tour in Vietnam 68-69. He spends his spare time coaching the girls varsity softball team at Pike Central High School or playing golf.



**Glen Hammack  
Floyd Co.**

And Glen Hammack in Floyd County served in the U.S. Air Force from 1981 through 1985 and the Kentucky Air National Guard from 1985 until 2000 when a back injury forced him into early retirement.

**Bill Steen  
Tipton Co.**

Bill Steen from Tipton County is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served July 1955 to October 1964 who recently retired Steel Parts Corporation in Tipton. Spends his spare time bowling, gardening and traveling with Mrs. Steen

We welcome all of these gentlemen to the ranks of County Veteran Service Officers and look forward to working with them in the future. We'll see you in June for the Annual Conference in Anderson.

## Family Support Network

The Indiana National Guard Family Support Network Needs your support.

Today's Guard and Reserve assets are being tasked for deployment at a far greater rate than ever before. These young people are deploying to cover everything from Peace Keeping missions to direct combat support, both on the ground and in the air. They need to know that we are keeping an eye on their families while they are in the field.

The Guard is well prepared to meet the military related needs of family members when the Guardsman is deployed. Pay issues, Tricare (medical) issues, those issues requiring the services of the American Red Cross, are all part of the plan. But as we all know, life is what happens on the way to executing the plan.

The families first call is and should be to the unit, the unit has the responsibility to provide for most of the needs of the families of there people who are deployed. But now and then the unit needs help finding the right local resource to fill the need the family has at the moment. The need could be anything from a short-term financial crisis, to getting the grass cut, to needing spiritual support.

And this is where the County Veterans Service Officer may be able to help. Often the deployed members family doesn't live in the county where the Armory is located. The people manning the phones at the Armory and trying to answer the questions don't know where the Veterans Service Organizations post are in the next county over much less which one is going to have the particular resource the family needs. The County Service Officers probably do know these things.

So what we have done is provide each Armory with a list of County Veterans Service Officers, the Work Address, Work Phone and Working Hours so they can contact you to ask the questions. And we are asking you to help them find the right local resource to resolve the issue in question. Most of you are already doing this, and we appreciate your continuing support.



## Cemetery Construction Continues

Construction of the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery is progressing. The foundations have been poared and the poured concrete walls of the administration building are going up one panel at a time and the streets are beginning to take shape.

Burials continue to take place on the other side of the cemetery. More than 90 burials have taken place to date and things are beginning to take shape on the grounds.

We are saddened to report the death of William M. Tandy who had worked as a member of the grounds keeping team at the cemetery almost from the very beginning. Bill died on Saturday February 23, 2002 and is buried in the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery. He was a veteran of WWII serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

## Law Increases Veterans' Burial Benefits

WASHINGTON -- Under a new law, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will increase reimbursement for funeral expenses and cemetery plots for service-disabled veterans and provide government markers for veterans' graves even if families already have installed private markers.

"The modest increases in payments to veterans' families, and the additional monuments to our heroes' service, are steps toward better acknowledging this nation's appreciation of its veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

The Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 increases the burial and funeral expense allowance for veterans who die as a result of a service-connected disability from \$1,500 to \$2,000 and the cemetery plot allowance, for certain other disabled veterans, from \$150 to \$300.

The law also directs VA to honor requests for government markers for veterans buried in private cemeteries even if their graves have headstones or markers furnished at private expense. Previous law prevented VA from providing markers in that situation. These increases are among many provisions of Public Law 107-103 that expand other veterans' benefits.

About 9,800 families receive funeral expense reimbursement for service-connected deaths each year. The \$500 increase in the funeral reimbursement, the first since 1988, is expected to increase the government's cost by about \$5 million a year. This change applies to deaths on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

About 90,000 families become eligible for the plot allowance annually. The cost of increasing the amount, which had been \$150 since 1973, will be about \$13 million a year. The higher allowance will be paid for deaths on or after Dec. 1, 2001.

The plot allowance is paid when a veteran is buried in a non-government cemetery. Also, the veteran must meet one of the following three criteria: The veteran was eligible to receive VA disability compensation or a VA pension, was discharged from military service due to disability or died in a VA hospital.

In the past, people who submitted VA applications to receive a government marker had to certify that the veteran's grave was unmarked. Some families complained of unfairness because they could not obtain the government's free marker to commemorate the veteran's service if they had purchased a marker.

Under the new law, the applicant must certify that the marker will be placed only in a cemetery. VA will send the marker only to a designated cemetery.

The new provision for markers applies to veterans' deaths on or after Dec. 27, 2001. By Feb. 1, 2006, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs will report to

Congress on how much this benefit is being used and recommend whether or not to continue it.

## Using the GI Bill to help Veterans in On The Job Training and Apprenticeship programs

Since World War II thousands of Indiana veterans and other eligible persons have used the GI Bill to further their education and training. The State Approving Agency (SAA) is the organization that has approved public colleges and universities in Indiana for veterans to use the GI Bill. What is little known is that the SAA has also approved hundreds of on-the-job training (OJT) and apprenticeship programs.

Apprenticeship Training is on-the-job training coupled with classroom instruction in the principles behind the practices. The apprentice receives GI Bill benefits while working full time and earning wages. Apprenticeship programs are normally two to five years in length. Although program registration with the Department of Labor/Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training is not mandatory for veterans, it is recommended in order to provide the veteran with journeyworker papers upon successful completion of the training. Some examples of currently approved apprenticeship programs are: Carpenter, Electrician, Bricklayer, Asbestos Worker, Plumber, Iron Worker, Tool & Die Maker, and Machinist.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is training that you receive while actually performing a job and earning wages. It is possible to receive your GI Bill benefits while performing OJT. OJT programs are normally from six months to two years in length. The job you are training for must require a minimum of six months to learn and there are certain pay schedules that must be followed. Some examples of currently approved OJT programs are: Technical Customer Service Representative, Welder, Auto Mechanic, Glass Installer, Police Officer and Deputy Sheriff.

In order to be eligible the veteran must fall under one of the following Chapters of the Code of Federal Regulations:

**Chapter 30:** The veteran must have entered active duty after July 1, 1985 and contributed \$100.00 per month during the first year of service to the Montgomery GI Bill.

**Chapter 32:** The veteran must have entered active duty between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985 and contributed to the Veterans Educational Assistance Program.

**Chapter 34:** The veteran must have entered active duty between February 1, 1955 and December 31, 1976.

**Chapter 35:** Covers the dependent or surviving spouse of a service member killed or missing in action or a 100% service connected disabled veteran with wartime service

**Chapter 1606:** Covers National Guard and Reserve members with a 6 year commitment.

Contact your National Guard or Reserve Unit to verify your eligibility.

If you are unsure of your eligibility, contact the VA Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000 and speak to a counselor. When you call, you will need to know your service number and the dates of your service. GI Bill education benefits are valid for only 10 years from the date of separation from active duty (Chapters 30,32 and 34). When speaking to the counselor, be specific as to what program you are planning to pursue.

If the training program you are in is not approved contact the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs, State Approving Agency section at 1-800-400-4520 and talk to one of the representatives about getting it approved. You earned your GI Benefits, don't let them slip away.

## Aviation Security Act gives preference to military retirees

Veterans News and Information Service

The Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001, signed by President Bush on Nov. 19, gives military veterans who retired after a career in service a preference when it comes to filling the new private-sector and federal jobs created by the legislation.

"With the men and women of the armed forces now in harm's way in the war on terrorism, it's entirely appropriate that the legislation born of the Sept. 11 attack acknowledges the value our veterans bring to the workforce," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

"We recognize the importance of security in our public transportation. Men and women who wore their nation's uniform can be depended on to help provide that security."

The Act provides that the Federal Aviation Administration will develop standards for hiring airport security personnel that require military veteran retirees receive a preference. These standards will apply to both federal and non-federal employees.

Existing veterans preference rules and regulations are not affected by the provisions of this new law.

"The skills and experience of these retired veterans will allow them to make a major contribution to our national security. This not only extends their service in an important effort but allows the country to benefit from the investment already made in their training," said Principi.

In the security screening area, the Department of Transportation (DOT) plans to hire a significant number of new Federal security screeners..

Retirees who would like to be considered for one of these critical positions should send their name and email address to: [screener@ost.dot.gov](mailto:screener@ost.dot.gov) mail to: [screener@ost.dot.gov](mailto:screener@ost.dot.gov) or call the DOT Connection at 202-366-9392 or 1-800-525-2878 to leave your name and address. You will be sent application information as soon as it is available.

Those interested in the Federal Air Marshal positions may contact the Aviation Careers Division by telephone at (405) 954-4657, by fax at (405) 954-6397, or e-mail at <mailto:9-AMC-AMH-300@mmacmail.jccbi.gov>.

More detailed information on both the Federal Air Marshal and Security Screener positions are available on the Internet at <http://jobs.faa.gov/>.

## Information on Federal Airport Security Screener Job Applications.

INFORMATION ADVISORY FROM THE HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

On November 19, 2001, President Bush signed the Transportation Security Act making airport security a direct Federal responsibility. As a result of this legislation the Department of Transportation (DOT) plans to hire a significant number of new Federal

security screeners. The new security force will be comprised of highly qualified and well-trained U.S. citizens.

Recently, veterans have been contacting the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to request information on the application process for security screeners. DOT is expected to begin hiring Federal security screeners in February 2002. By law, veterans are accorded a preference in the hiring of Federal security screeners.

The following information from the FAA/DOT web site (<http://jobs.faa.gov/SecurityScreeningRequirements.htm>) is provided to assist veterans in applying for Federal security screener jobs.

“One requirement of the Transportation Security Act is to establish qualification standards for screeners to be employed by the Federal Government. In response to this requirement, on December 19, 2001 the Department of Transportation published the basic eligibility requirements for Federal security screeners. To review those requirements, see below.”

**”If you'd like to be considered for one of these critical positions, please email your name and email address to: [screener@ost.dot.gov](mailto:screener@ost.dot.gov) or call the DOT Connection toll-free at 1-866-404-1227 to leave your name and mailing address. We will send you application information as soon as it is available, at which time we will begin accepting applications.”**

**U.S. Department of Transportation  
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)  
Screener Employment Eligibility Requirements  
December 19, 2001**

When the TSA takes over the responsibility for passenger screening operations all newly hired screeners must:

- Possess a high school diploma or general education diploma or have one year of any type of work experience that demonstrates the applicant's ability to perform the work of the position.
- Be U.S. Citizens.
- Pass a background and security investigation, including a criminal records check, in accordance with Federal law and standards established by the Transportation Security Administration.

- Possess certain basic aptitudes and physical abilities as measured through a medical examination. These include color perception, visual and aural acuity, physical coordination, and motor skills, to the following standards:
  - Be able to distinguish objects on the screening equipment monitor at the appropriate imaging standard as specified by the Transportation Security Administration;
  - Be able to distinguish each color displayed on every type of screening equipment and explain what each color signifies;
  - Be able to hear and respond to the spoken voice and to audible alarms generated by screening equipment in an active checkpoint environment;
  - Be able efficiently and thoroughly to manipulate and handle baggage, containers, and other objects subject to security processing; and
  - Have sufficient dexterity and capability thoroughly to conduct hand-metal detector and pat down search procedures over an individual's entire body.
- Be able to read, speak, and write English well enough to:
  - Carry out written and oral instructions regarding the proper performance of screening duties;
  - Read English language identification media, credentials, airline tickets, and labels on items normally encountered in the screening process;
  - Provide direction to and understand and answer questions from English-speaking individuals undergoing screening; and
  - Write incident reports and statements and log entries into security records in the English language.
- Any applicant tentatively selected for this position will be subject to a pre-employment or

pre-appointment drug screening. Persons occupying these positions will be subject to random drug and/or alcohol testing.

- Pass a Federal Civil Aviation Security Screener Aptitude test. The test will measure:
  - Aptitude necessary to conduct screening;
  - Ability to deal effectively with the public; and
  - English proficiency.

The federal aptitude test is being developed and should be ready for use in February 2002.

These new criteria will be effective once TSA assumes contract responsibilities for the screening function. Current screening company employees will be allowed to continue to be employed until such time as the work they are performing is taken over by Federal employees. At that time they may apply, and if qualified, be hired as new Federal screeners. In the interim, retraining of the current workforce may be required to ensure a consistent level of performance.

As provided by law, the TSA will give hiring preference to Veterans. The TSA will also recruit and give consideration to displaced aviation workers.

### ***New CHAMPVA Regulations***

WASHINGTON – Regulations that bring several improvements to the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) were published in the *Federal Register* today.

"I am very happy VA can provide improved financial protection for families of disabled veterans against the effect of an injury or long-term illness," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

The new rules will bring financial relief to CHAMPVA beneficiaries and extend benefits to

older survivors and dependents of some disabled or deceased veterans who face medical expenses not paid by Medicare or other third-party payers.

One improvement, called "CHAMPVA for Life," actually began in October. It is designed for spouses or dependents who are 65 or older. They must be family members of veterans who have a permanent and total service-connected disability, who died of a service-connected condition or who were totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death. They also must have Medicare coverage.

"CHAMPVA for Life" began paying benefits for covered medical services four months ago to eligible beneficiaries who are 65 or older and enrolled in Medicare Parts A&B. "CHAMPVA for Life" benefits are payable after payment by Medicare or other third-party payers. For services not covered by Medicare or other insurance, such as outpatient prescription medications, CHAMPVA will be the primary payer.

CHAMPVA beneficiaries who reached age 65 as of June 5, 2001, but were not enrolled in Medicare Part B on that date, will be eligible for this expanded benefit even though not enrolled in Medicare Part B. There is no change in CHAMPVA coverage for those beneficiaries 65 and older who do not qualify for Medicare.

In addition, the regulation will reduce the catastrophic cap, or amount of out-of-pocket expenses for CHAMPVA beneficiaries. Under the new rule, CHAMPVA will pay 100 percent of allowable medical expenses after a beneficiary reaches \$3,000 in out-of-pocket expenses, a reduction from \$7,500.

The rule also provides coverage for school-required physical examinations for beneficiaries through age 17.

People can request an application by writing to the VA Health Administration Center (HAC), P.O. Box 469028, Denver, CO 80246-9028.

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, people must be family members of veterans who have a permanent and total service-connected disability, who died of a service-connected condition or who were totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death.

Updates about CHAMPVA are posted on VA's Health Administration Center Web site at [www.va.gov/hac](http://www.va.gov/hac).

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